Hepatitis Elimination Spotlight: Charles B. Wang Health Center Tackles Hepatitis B

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In the United States, more than 50 percent of chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) infections occur among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs), although they make up only about 5 percent of the U.S. population. This high burden of HBV leads to high rates of liver cancer. AAPIs are up to 13 times more likely to develop liver cancer than other groups, primarily due to HBV infection. Compared to Whites, AAPI liver cancer death rates are 60 percent higher. Charles B. Wang Community Health Center is committed to preventing new hepatitis B infections and deaths among its patients. There is a lot to learn from programs and strategies being undertaken by partners across the nation that can be useful when adapted to other clinics and health systems.

What is Charles B. Wang Community Health Center?

The Charles B. Wang Community Health Center (the Health Center) offers comprehensive primary care services at four clinical sites in New York, NY. The Health Center's inclusive approach serves all patients regardless of their ability to pay, race/ethnicity, language, or their immigration history. Located in communities that have a high proportion of AAPIs, the Health Center patients have a high burden of hepatitis B.

In recognition of its comprehensive and culturally accessible hepatitis B services, the Health Center's Hepatitis B Program was awarded, in 2015, the Joan H. Tisch Community Health Prize by Hunter College's Roosevelt Institute for Public Policy.

How is Charles B. Wang Health Center Working Towards Hepatitis B Elimination?

The Health Center's Hepatitis B Program supports hepatitis elimination efforts through their work to reduce:

- HBV transmitted from mother to child, and

- chronic hepatitis B liver complications among the patient population through clinical care, community outreach, advocacy, and research.

The Health Center created the Hep B Moms Program in 2010 to prevent transmission of HBV from mother-to-child by providing comprehensive multidisciplinary care to mothers with chronic HBV and their infants. All pregnant women with chronic HBV are evaluated, educated and linked to HBV care with a primary care provider or specialist to ensure appropriate HBV care while infants are followed until completion of HBV vaccinations and post-vaccination serologic testing.

Additional preventive and clinical care services provided by the Health Center include:

- Free first-time hepatitis B screening for all patients
- Hepatitis B vaccination, at a reduced fee for those without health insurance
- Education
- Treatment
- Monitoring visits
- Care coordination
- Discounted fees for services based on family size and income for uninsured patients
- Assistance for eligible patients to apply for free or low-cost hepatitis B medication and affordable liver cancer screening

How can others benefit from the Health Center's work?

To raise community awareness about getting tested for HBV, the Health Center partnered with renowned NYC-based comic book writer, Amy Chu, and Chinatown-raised illustrator, Louie Chin, to create, "The Test", a comic book about a nurse practitioner who encourages members of her community to get tested for HBV (available in both English, Chinese - PDF, and Vietnamese). This engaging book helps readers understand the importance of HBV screening and encourages them to take action to get family and community members tested.

To learn more about the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center, visit http://www.cbwchc.org/.

To learn more about elimination efforts across the United States, visit Mapping Hepatitis Elimination in Action.

Related pages and posts:

- Mapping Hepatitis Elimination in Action

- Mapping Hepatitis Elimination Blog Highlights Help-4-Hep Contributions
- Burning the Bridge for Hepatitis C infections with Sterile Syringe Programs. Are you contributing to the Global Viral Hepatitis Elimination Plan?

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